

USNA 251
Tu-Th 1:15-2:30
Nord Hall 212

Instructor: Anne Helmreich, Ph.D.
Office hours: W 3-5
& by appointment
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216-368-2514

Graduate assistant: Rosemary Burk

Writing Instructor: Rachel Kapelle

Course Description: Our society today faces pressing questions about environmental and climactic conditions, equitable distribution of resources, and preservation. The humanities have a valuable contribution to make to these crucial conversations for it is through the humanities we can explore changing attitudes to nature over time, how arts and culture have expressed our ideas about nature, and debates about ethics and values pertaining to the nature and the environment. Deeper understanding of how western societies have conceptualized the relationship of society to nature will lead to better informed, more thoughtful decisions about such global issues as the allocation of natural resources, stewardship, preservation, and sustainability.

The course will focus on four subtopics that have shaped the dynamic between humanity and nature – a) the garden, b) literary and artistic tropes of the pastoral, the georgic, and the sublime, c) the wilderness, and d) preservation and ethics– exploring a diversity of modes of expression, philosophies, beliefs, and opinions within these four themes. Through this course, students will develop a deeper understanding of the historic relationships between nature and culture and skills related to analyzing and expressing these relationships, as conceived in both past and present. This course has received special funding through the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Enduring Questions Grant.

Course Goals: Building on the first seminar experience, this course provides the opportunity for each student to achieve the following goals:

- Deeper knowledge of the relationship between humanity and nature, past and present, as expressed by the four sub-themes
- Enhanced skills in close reading and critical analysis of text and image
- An increased appreciation of how values and ethics apply to issues of nature/environment/humanity
- Enhanced higher level, critical thinking skills
- Enhanced skills in oral and written expression

Course Requirements:

Syllabus Subject to Change at the discretion of the instructors.

In order to acquire and apply new knowledge, students are expected to be prepared in advance for each class session, contribute positively to class sessions, and in the intervals to contribute to the on-line discussion. Seminar discussion topics, readings and related public programs are noted in the calendar below. In order to enhance skills in verbal expression, students are expected to contribute to class discussion, present course readings either solo or in collaboration with a partner, and prepare a brief presentation on the subject of the final essay. In order to enhance skills in written expression, students will complete three written essays; the last paper will emphasize values and ethics. All instructions for assignments will be discussed in class and, when relevant, posted to blackboard.

Course Participation & Exercises, including group/partner:	10%
Paper (Short) #1 (text analysis)	15%
Paper (short) #2 (visual analysis)	20%
Paper (long) #3 (text/image analysis)	25%
Framing assigned reading; leading discussion	15%
Final presentation	15%

Explanation of Grades

- “A”= exceptional work, indicated by an excellent and critical understanding and articulation (on exams, class participation and in-class writing) of course material and the demonstration of independent thinking. 90-100%
- “B”= good work, indicated by much more than a satisfactory understanding and articulation of course material as evidenced in exams, class participation, in-class writings, and papers. 80-89%
- “C”= satisfactory work, indicated by a basic understanding and articulation of course material as evidenced in exams, class participation, in-class writings, and papers. 70-79%
- “D”= unsatisfactory work, indicated by an inadequate understanding and articulation of course material. 60-69%
- “F”= failure to complete all course work and/or inability to demonstrate an understanding and articulation of course material. 0-59%

All work on exams, papers, in-class writing, and discussion must be your own. Students are expected to read and conform to Case’s Academic Integrity Policy. Case complies with the American with Disabilities Act and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Students who need disability accommodation should seek assistance from Educational Support Services. Any eligible students should speak with the instructors as soon as possible about any accommodation that might need to be arranged.

Course Calendar

Please post all questions pertaining to the assigned reading or responses to questions at least 24 hours in advance because presenters will be drawing on these materials to prepare.

August 24: Introduction to the course: completion of course goals, prior assessment of knowledge, discussion of course & concepts, in-class exercise

The Garden

August 26: visit to the Cleveland Botanical Garden; complete in-class exercise and turn into Rosemary Burke (graduate student mailbox, Art History department). Also, please submit your top three choices of readings to present and your partner if you wish to present as a team at this time.

August 31st: discussion of presentation of reading assignment; investigating the garden of eden; introduction to textual and visual analysis; primary vs. secondary sources

Assigned Reading: The Book of Genesis, chapters 1-4 - please use the edition found at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/genesis-rsv.html>. Prepare a list of topics in answer to the questions: “What would you need to know in order to produce a close reading and sound analysis of this text?” or “What do you wish you knew about this text?”; prepare a response to the question: “How has the concept of the Garden of Eden shaped humanity’s relationship to nature?”

September 2nd: Why make a garden? (land and power)

Assigned Reading:

*Francis Bacon, “Of Gardens,” *Literature and Nature*, pp. 16-21.

*Alexander Pope, from “An Essay on Man, In Four Epistles,” Epistle 4, “Of the Use of Riches,” *Literature and Nature*, pp. 243-245. The full poem is available via 18th century collections online (KSL database).

September 7th: Botanical Gardens, then and now

*William Curtis, “Proposals for opening by subscription, a Botanic Garden, to be called the London Botanic Garden,” 1778. pp. 1-9 Source: Eighteenth Century Collections Online (KSL database).

Lucile H. Brockway, “Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens,” *American Ethnologist* 6 (Aug. 1979), 449-465. Source: JSTOR (KSL database)

Recommended Reading: Therese O’Malley, “Your Garden Must be a Museum to You”: Early American Botanic Gardens,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 59 (1996): 207-231. Source: JSTOR (KSL database)

September 9th: Writing Workshop #1: Analyzing and interpreting texts, close reading, thesis formation, citation models (Assignment for Paper #1 will be available on blackboard by this date)

September 14th land and the people: Central Park

Assigned Reading:

*Frederick Law Olmsted, selection pending.

Roy Rosenzweig, Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: a history of Central Park*. pp. 15-36, 59-91. Source: photocopy

16 September Reflecting on the garden today: Jamaica Kincaid

Assigned Reading:

*Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden Book: To Name is to Possess*, pp. 114-124, What Joseph Banks Wrought, pp. 132-142. Source: photocopy.

Allan Vorda and Jamaica Kincaid, "An Interview with Jamaica Kincaid," *Mississippi Review* 1996. Source: JSTOR (KSL database)

Recommended: Jamaica Kincaid lecture at CWRU, 2009.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plKETZkFGbM>

21 September The Garden and the Lawn

Assigned Reading:

Ted Steinberg, *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*, 2006, pp. 3-15, 201-225. Source: photocopy.

Paper #1 Due

Literary and Artistic Tropes: The Pastoral, the Georgic, and the Sublime

23 September what is a trope? introduction to the pastoral and the georgic.

Assigned Reading:

*Milton, *Lycidas*, from *Literature and Nature*, pp. 81-87.

* *The Georgics of Virgil*, pp. xi-xx, 3-11. Source: photocopy

28 September The tensions of Romanticism: Wordsworth, and Constable
Assigned Reading:

*William Wordsworth, *Lines written in early spring*, *The Tables Turned*, *Tintern Abbey*, from *Nature and Literature*, pp. 446- 452.

John Barrell, "Constable," *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, 131-164. Source: photocopy

Syllabus Subject to Change at the discretion of the instructors.

30 September Visit to the Cleveland Museum of Art & introduction to the skills of visual analysis; discussion of Paper #2

Assignment: submit your visual example (to be discussed in class); if you are unable to find one, then you will have the opportunity to select a work of art at the Cleveland Museum of Art

5 October America and the Pastoral Ideal

Assigned Reading:

*Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, Chapter 2, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" -->
<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden02.html>

Self-Assessment of Paper #1 Due; recommended follow-up appointment with course instructors

7 October Visit to the Cleveland Museum of Art and introduction to the concept of the sublime

Assigned Reading:

*Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful", *Literature and Nature*, 333-336.

The Wilderness

12 October Wilderness and the making of America: Thomas Jefferson

Assigned Reading:

*Thomas Jefferson, from "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Literature and Nature*, 380-384.

David Waldstreicher, ed. *Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 1-38. Source: photocopy.

"What is Wilderness and do we need it?", *Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 280-281.

14 October Wilderness and the making of America 2: Thoreau

*Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," *Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 284-288.
Source: Photocopy

Barbara "Barney" Nelson, "Rustling Thoreau's Cattle, Wilderness and Domesticity in "Walking",
Thoreau's Sense of Place, 254-265. Source: photocopy

Paper #2 due

21 October Photography & The Making of the National Parks

Assigned Reading:

Syllabus Subject to Change at the discretion of the instructors.

Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend, Photography and the American West*, pp. 180-206. Source: photocopy

14 October America: Pastoral or Wilderness?

Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, 3-11, 242-265. Source: photocopy

William Cronon, from “The Trouble with Wilderness...”, *Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 199-305. Source: photocopy

Recommended: Donald Waller, from “Getting back to the Right Nature”, *Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 305-309. Source: photocopy.

Paper #2 Due

Preservation & Ethics

21 October Environmentalism and Environmental Ethics

Assigned Reading:

*Rachel Carson, from “And No Birds Sing” in *Silent Spring*, *Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 541-549. Source: photocopy.

26 October The Sierra Club and Preservation of Wilderness in the 20th and 21st centuries

Assigned Reading:

*Eliot Porter, *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*, 1967. Source: Course Reserves (selections to be determined by presenters)

Rebecca Solnit, “Every Corner is Alive: Eliot Porter as Environmentalist and an Artist,” *Eliot Porter, The Color of Wildness*, 113-131. Source: photocopy

28 October Workshop #2: The Research Paper (prospectus draft due)

Assigned Reading:

Philip Gourevith, A Reporter at Large, The Monkey and the Fish, *The New Yorker* 2009. Source: photocopy

2 November Environmental Ethics

Assigned Readings:

Daniel Dancer, "Over-Glossied and Imaged- Out, Toward a Deep Photography Ethic," *Wild Earth* (spring 1996), pp. 81-87. Source: photocopy.

David Stephenson, "Beautiful Lies: Photography and Wilderness". Source: photocopy.

Lydia Millet, "Ecoporn Exposed," *High Country News* (April 2004). Source: photocopy.

Post/bring to class images that relate to the readings- either exemplify or counter the authors' arguments.

4 November Environmental Ethics continued

*Bill McKibben, from "The End of Nature", *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, pp. 1120-1130. Source: Photocopy

Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, "A Conceivable Human Future: Time and Morality in the Sixth Mass Extinction," <http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/phil/A%20Conceivable%20Human%20Future.pdf>.

Revised prospectus due

9 November Environmental Ethics continued, Public Policy

Assigned Readings:

Richard N. L. Andrews, from *Managing the Environment, Environment, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, pp. 715-727.

*Elizabeth Kolbert, selection from *Field Notes from a Catastrophe* and Videotape of presentation.

11 November Personal Influences and Choices:

Assigned Reading: Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild* (note that in time remaining after the presentations we will continue to discuss this text)

16 November Presentations on Paper #3

18 November Presentations on Paper #3

23 November Presentations on Paper #3

30 November Presentations on Paper #3

2 December Writing Workshop #3 Research Paper continued

9 December Paper #3 Due

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